

I CLAIM:

1. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a device-dependent medical procedure for a medical condition, the method comprising:

5 providing a computer message server including a stored, predefined message pertaining to said medical procedure and a stored provider directory of a plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers;

10 providing a user interface linkage to said computer message server over a wide access communication network for exchanging data with a user;

advertising publicly an access route to said user interface linkage together with an ad message about said medical condition;

15 receiving from said user via said user interface linkage a user location identifier;

20 querying said provider directory with said user location identifier and obtaining a result, said result including contact information for at least one of said plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers; and

communicating said result to said user via said user interface linkage.

25 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said result is a result message including a list of procedure-qualified medical service providers in an order according to proximity to said user based on said user location identifier.

30 3. The method according to claim 1 wherein said computer message server is an Internet server.

35 4. The method according to claim 1 wherein said computer message server is an Internet server including HTML files for generating user displays, wherein said stored, predefined messages are files including text, and wherein said user interface linkage

is an operable connection between said Internet server and said Internet.

5        5.    The method according to claim 1 wherein said computer message server is a telephone message server, wherein said stored, predefined messages are audio message files and said user interface linkage is an operable connection between said telephone message server and a public telephone switching network.

10       6.    The method of claim 1 further comprising charging a subscription fee to a medical service provider for including said medical service provider in said provider directory.

15       7.    The method of claim 1 further comprising maintaining a referral database by recording each said location and each said result obtained therefrom.

      8.    The method of claim 1 further comprising charging a per referral fee to a medical service provider included in said provider directory when said result includes said medical service provider.

20       9.    The method of claim 1 further comprising charging a per inquiry fee to a medical device seller of said medical device for each said result communicated to said user.

25       10.   The method of claim 1 further comprising charging a commission fee to a medical device seller of said medical device for each sale of said medical device.

30       11.   The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving from said user via said user interface linkage a user health insurance plan and wherein said provider directory includes data associating said plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers to accepted health insurance plans.

35       12.   The method of claim 1 wherein said user location identifier is a telephone area code or a unique telephone number.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said user location identifier is a user ZIP code.

14. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a medical device for a device-dependent  
5 procedure suitable for treating a medical condition, the method comprising:

maintaining a computerized data directory of a plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers;

10 providing a user interface to said data directory through a wide access communication network for exchanging data with a user;

receiving from said user via said user interface an inquiry pertaining to a medical condition;

15 querying said data directory with said inquiry and obtaining a result; and

communicating said result to said user via said user interface.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising  
20 receiving from said user via said user interface a user health insurance plan and wherein said provider directory includes data associating said plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers to accepted health insurance plans.

25 16. The method of claim 14 wherein said inquiry includes a medical condition of concern to said user and said result includes a message identifying a device-dependent medical procedure for said medical condition of concern.

30 17. The method of claim 16 wherein said message further includes the identification of a procedure-qualified medical service provider for said device-dependent medical procedure.

35 18. The method of claim 16 wherein said message further includes contact information for a

plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers for said device-dependent medical procedure.

19. The method of claim 16 wherein said inquiry includes a user location identifier for  
5 preferentially selecting procedure-qualified service providers with locations near said user.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said user location identifier is a user telephone area code number or a unique telephone number.

10 21. The method of claim 19 wherein said user location identifier is a user ZIP code.

22. The method of claim 14 further comprising charging a subscription fee to a medical service provider for including said medical service provider in said data  
15 directory.

23. The method of claim 14 further comprising maintaining a referral database by recording each said inquiry and each said result.

24. The method of claim 14 further comprising  
20 charging a per referral fee to a medical service provider included in said data directory when said result includes said medical service provider.

25. The method of claim 14 further comprising charging a per inquiry fee to a medical device seller of  
25 said medical device for each said result communicated to said user.

26. The method of claim 14 further comprising charging a commission fee to a medical device seller of said medical device for each sale of said medical device.

30 27. The method of claim 14 wherein said plurality of medical service providers includes a physician.

28. The method of claim 14 wherein said plurality of medical service providers includes a  
35 hospital.

29. The method of claim 14 wherein said plurality of medical service providers includes an outpatient surgery center.

5 30. The method of claim 14 wherein said wide access communication network is the Internet.

31. The method of claim 14 wherein said wide access communication network is a public telephone switching network.

10 32. The method of claim 14 wherein the step of providing a user interface to said data directory through a wide access communication network includes simultaneously providing an operable link between said data directory and both the Internet and a public telephone switching network.

15 33. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a less invasive medical procedure for treating a medical condition, the method comprising:

20 maintaining a computerized data directory of a plurality of medical service providers qualified to perform said medical procedure;

providing a user interface to said data directory through a wide access communication network for exchanging data with a user;

25 receiving from said user via said user interface an inquiry pertaining to medical procedures for a medical concern, said inquiry including a user location identifier;

querying said data directory with said inquiry and obtaining a result; and

30 communicating said result to said user via said user interface.

34. The method according to claim 33 further including publicly advertising an access route to said user interface and said medical condition.

35. The method according to claim 33 wherein said data directory is resident on a call-server computer and said access route is a telephone number.

5 36. The method according to claim 33 wherein said data directory is resident on an Internet server computer and said access route is an Internet website domain name.

10 37. The method according to claim 33 wherein said data directory is resident on an Internet server computer and said access route is an Internet e-mail address.

15 38. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a plurality of different medical devices utilized in device-dependent medical treatments for a plurality of different medical conditions, the method comprising:

20 maintaining a provider database including a conditions directory of different medical conditions for which a device-dependent treatment is available utilizing a medical device and a provider directory of device-qualified medical providers for each said device-dependent treatment;

25 providing a user interface to said provider database through a wide access communication network for exchanging data with a user;

receiving from said user an inquiry pertaining to treatment options for a medical condition;

querying said provider database with said received inquiry and obtaining a result; and

30 communicating said result to said user via said user interface.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said inquiry includes a medical condition of concern to said user and said result includes a message identifying a

device-dependent medical treatment for said medical condition of concern.

40. The method of claim 38 wherein said message further includes the identification of a device-qualified medical service provider for said device-dependent medical treatment.

41. The method of claim 38 wherein said inquiry includes a medical condition of concern to said user and said result includes a message that no provider of the device-dependent medical treatment in the user's locality or accepting the users health plan could be identified.

42. The method of claim 38 further comprising receiving from said user via said user interface a user health insurance plan and wherein said provider directory includes data associating said plurality of procedure-qualified medical service providers to accepted health insurance plans.

43. The method of claim 38 further comprising charging a per referral fee to said qualified medical service providers included in said provider directory when said result includes said medical service provider.

44. The method of claim 38 further comprising charging a per inquiry fee to a medical device seller of said medical device for each said result communicated to said user.

45. The method of claim 38 wherein said receiving from said user via said user interface an inquiry pertaining to a medical condition includes the steps of:

responding to an access to said user interface with a menu of medical conditions; and

receiving from said user via said user interface a selection from said menu.

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46. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a medical procedure requiring a specialized medical device, the method comprising:

5 providing a computerized data directory of a plurality of medical service providers equipped with said specialized medical device and qualified to perform said device-dependent medical procedure;

10 providing a user interface to said data directory through a wide access communication network for exchanging data with a user;

receiving from said user via said user interface an inquiry pertaining to medical procedures for a medical concern and a user location identifier;

15 querying said data directory with said inquiry and obtaining a result; and

communicating said result to said user via said user interface.

46. A computerized method for facilitating the utilization of a medical procedure requiring a specialized medical device, the method comprising: